



SCI Life Expectancy Calculator

Instructions

To use our spinal cord injury (SCI) Life Expectancy Calculator, please visit the following link:

<https://chp.musc.edu/research/help/tools/life-expectancy-calculator>

Once on the webpage, choose the type of calculator (person with SCI/family/friend or healthcare professional) and answer all the questions. After all questions have been answered, click the button “calculate”. From there, your personalized risk results of your estimated life expectancy will appear.

These estimates should be used for general knowledge only. Life expectancy reflects the average experience of a group of similar individuals. Some individuals will not survive as long, while others will survive longer. These estimates are based solely on the chosen factors below. Many other factors can also influence life expectancy and may need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Try calculating different profiles by changing the amount of education, hours worked or annual income to see how it affects life expectancy.

Our Life Expectancy Calculator uses the following factors:

1. Current age, Gender
2. Race ethnicity – white, black, other
3. Cause of injury
4. SCI injury level – Non-cervical, C1-C4, C5-C8
5. AIS/Frankel score (A-D)
6. Socioeconomic factor – income
7. Highest level of education
8. Hours working for pay/week

The result from this calculator is an estimate of your life expectancy. This calculator is solely to help people understand how various factors (**amount of education, hours worked, annual income**) affect your life expectancy. Do not use this instead of seeing a healthcare provider. If you have concerns for your mental or physical well-being, please contact a service provider with clinical expertise in your area.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is life expectancy and how are they calculated?

- Life expectancy reflects the average actual number of years of life for a group of individuals with similar characteristics and points at which half of the people with a certain set of characteristics will still be alive.
- Our spinal cord injury (SCI) life expectancy estimates are based on the actual long-term survival experiences of people who completed our self-report assessments.
- A data set was created using each person's answers as a separate observation. A life expectancy table has been created using standard statistical procedures to provide an estimate of life expectancy.

Will drinking alcohol affect my life expectancy?

- People who frequently do heavy drinking or binge drinking of five or more drinks during a single occasion may have reduced life expectancy. This is due, at least in part, to a greater risk of dying from an unintentional injury.
- The more frequent the heavy drinking, the greater the risk.
- Drinking small amounts of alcohol has not been, to our knowledge, linked with a greater risk of mortality or decreased life expectancy.

Will taking medication to treat my secondary health conditions affect my life expectancy?

- Taking a lot of prescription medications to treat pain and other secondary conditions may increase your risk of mortality, especially due to unintentional drug overdose or other unintentional injuries.
- Taking some types of medications and heavy drinking may particularly lead to a greater risk of mortality. On the other hand, decreasing the frequency of use of prescription pain medication has been found to result in decreased risk of mortality. *This does not mean individuals should stop or cut back on their prescription medication use based on these findings. Individuals with SCI who take prescription medications should consult their physicians or healthcare providers before making any changes.*

How does my amount of education, employment status, and income affect my life expectancy?

- As educational level increases so does life expectancy since people with higher educational levels also improve their chances for being employed and for making more money.
- Being employed and having a higher family income is associated with greater life expectancy. We do not know for certain the reasons, although people who work tend to have more active lifestyles and a higher quality of life.
- People with higher income are better able to obtain the services that they need. They may also have less stress from worrying about how they are going to pay for their health needs.

Should I base my health care decisions on this or other fact sheets?

- No, the information is only to help you understand what we know of life expectancy based on our research. These estimates should be used for general knowledge only. Do not use this information instead of seeing a healthcare provider. If you have concerns for your mental or physical well-being, please contact a service provider with clinical expertise in your area.

Check out our other resources, available on our team website: <https://chp.musc.edu/research/help/tools>.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me, James Krause, PhD (Principal Investigator), at 843-792-1337 (krause@musc.edu) or Richard Aust (Project Coordinator) at 843-792-2605 (aust@musc.edu).